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Culture, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces

Research response to the External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces

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Culture, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces: research response to the *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*¹

Abstract:

In response to the themes identified in the 2015 report of the “External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces [CAF],” the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA) developed a comprehensive, multi-year research plan. Importantly, the proposed research does not seek to challenge or accept the findings of the external review but to provide analysis of available scientific evidence to respond to concerns and questions raised in the report and to conduct further research in areas that have not been sufficiently explored by defence social science research to respond to the concerns of the review. The proposal places particular emphasis on leadership and culture processes in the CAF as it seeks to understand what we cannot explain and what we assume to be true in the absence of scientific evidence. Given the developing priority of gender mainstreaming within both domestic and international military contexts, and the emphasis placed on gender-based analysis (GBA) in the external review, the research further seeks to integrate GBA across themes and research domains. Related domains such as victim support; socialization; culture and language; culture and social media; training culture; third party reporting and bystander intervention; and response to perpetrators are all important unique and related themes identified in the DGMPPRA proposal; however, this paper places particular focus on the analysis of available research that will inform qualitative study of the culture and leadership dynamics of the CAF, as they influence conduct and response to sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the CAF.

Introduction

In past decades, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has frequently made “front page” national news in Canada. Media coverage had a particular impact when, in May and June 1998, the popular national newsmagazine, *Maclean's*, published consecutive issues that featured charges of rape and harassment in the CAF on their front cover.¹ By April 2014 sexual misconduct in the CAF was once again highlighted when the front cover of popular Canadian newsmagazines. *L'Actualité*, along with sister magazine *Maclean's*,² claimed that the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the CAF was much higher than that previously identified in existing CAF research and data sources.

¹ The views and perspectives presented in this paper are those of the author and do not represent those of the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces.

In response, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) commissioned an external review of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the CAF. The External Review Authority (ERA), former Supreme Court Judge, Marie Deschamps, delivered her final report, “External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 27 March, 2015. Throughout the report she identified numerous cultural practices and processes which contribute to sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, widespread reluctance to report such transgressions, and inappropriate response when they are reported. The ERA further observed that “...there is a prevailing sexualized environment characterized by the frequent use of sexualized language, sexual jokes, innuendos, discriminatory comments with respect to the abilities of female members of the military...”,³ and that the use of language which belittles women is commonplace and frequently condoned. Importantly, the ERA reported that CAF members often expressed distrust with the chain of command and the belief that leadership encourages the suppression of reports of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct at the lowest level possible within the chain of command, and also contributes to a culture which functions to deter victims from reporting sexual misconduct.⁴ The findings and recommendations of the ERA demanded immediate action on the part of the Canadian military and further investigation to ensure that the CAF is positioned to reduce incidence of sexual misconduct, respond appropriately when it does occur, and importantly to influence positive cultural change.

The ERA placed significant emphasis on culture and leadership challenges; however, there is a paucity of available evidence-based research related to cultural processes and impacts, including the relationship between leadership and culture in the CAF, as they impact misconduct. The discussion in this paper places particular focus on these impacts, as well as discussion of the key concepts that are essential to the development and conduct of the research. Overall, this paper claims that it is critical to understand the cultural dynamics that influence behaviours across the CAF and its various units, including those mechanisms and processes which sustain or change embedded beliefs and assumptions that contribute to social practices. It is also critical that such research and analysis benefit from gender-based analysis to ensure that those aspects of culture which normalize a sexualized environment and influence experience and response among women and men are made visible. Ultimately, the research strategy seeks to better understand

cultural dynamics and influences at and among individual, sub-cultural unit and team, and organizational/institutional levels.⁵

Following a brief discussion of policy and related research, the discussion below explores the relationship between leadership, culture and inappropriate sexual behaviours, including discussion of theories and concepts regarding military culture, the role of socialization, and impacts of gender-based frameworks in male dominated organizations, such as the Canadian military. Importantly, the discussion highlights the disparate discourses that seek to explain gender-based exclusion, and related processes such as sexual harassment and misconduct in the military. These discourses reflect hegemonic masculinity or gender neutral assumptions, the military as an organization integrated with and reflecting values and practices in society or the military as a total institution with unique values, practices and influence mechanisms unique from society. Overall, the research seeks to test these opposing discourses in a bid to better understand the current gender dynamics of military culture which influence conduct and experience of military members.

Background: Policy and Research

In 1983, the CAF issued an initial policy statement that recognized increasing evidence to suggest that sexual harassment of servicewomen by servicemen was becoming a serious problem.⁶ Five years later, in 1988, the CAF promulgated its first harassment policy.⁷ In response to increasing representation and expanding roles of women in the military, increasing emphasis on the representation of diverse groups of Canadian women and men, and public pressure through media reports of harassment and assault, in 1998 the CAF initiated a review of policy which resulted in promulgation, in 2000, of an updated harassment policy with increased focus on prevention and resolution.⁸ A separate Department of National Defence (DND) and CAF policy on sexual misconduct and sexual disorders addresses those behaviours which constitute an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.⁹ Although there are clearly unique implications for addressing sexual harassment within organizations, and sexual misconduct which is considered a criminal code offence, for the purposes of the research discussed in this paper, they are not considered uniquely insofar as they represent sex and gender-based

misconduct which undermines military effectiveness. Furthermore, it is reasonable to claim that sexual harassment and sexual assault are frequently not isolated experiences. For example, the documentary film, *The Invisible War*, based on experiences of sexual assault in the United States military, claims that within military units where sexual harassment has been tolerated, rates of rape/sexual assault are as much as three times higher than in those units where it is not.¹⁰

Since at least the early 1990s, social science research has been conducted to measure the effectiveness of harassment policies, with a particular focus on measuring experience of harassment in the CAF through voluntary, anonymous surveys. Administered to random stratified samples of military members, these surveys ask participants to respond based on their experiences in the 12 months immediately preceding the survey. In 2012, 1.5 percent of all CAF members overall (women and men) reported experience of sexual harassment.¹¹ The analysis of surveys, administered in 1992, 1998, and 2012, indicate that the proportion of women who report such experiences has declined at each measurement point (26.2, 14¹² and nine percent,¹³ respectively); however, military women remain much more likely than military men to report experience of sexual harassment.¹⁴ Although these surveys measure other types of harassment including abuse of authority and harassment based on personal characteristics such as race and religion, sexual harassment garners particular attention as it often includes insidious and/or violent behaviours, is considered morally reprehensible by many Canadians, and importantly, evidence-based research has documented the harmful impacts to both individuals and organizations.¹⁵

In responding to the 2015 ERA report, the CAF was immediately concerned with gaining current understanding of the scope and experience of sexual misconduct in the CAF through survey measurement of self-reported experience of harassment and sexual misconduct. Statistics Canada administered a survey measurement tool to all members of the CAF Regular and Reserve Forces, from April to June 2016, yielding responses from more than 40,000 members of the CAF Regular and Reserve Forces.¹⁶ Notwithstanding the importance of measuring experiences of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, this proposal is not concerned with the number of individuals who report experience of harassment or assault; that is, the research seeks to strengthen qualitative understanding of cultural dynamics related to experiences of sexual

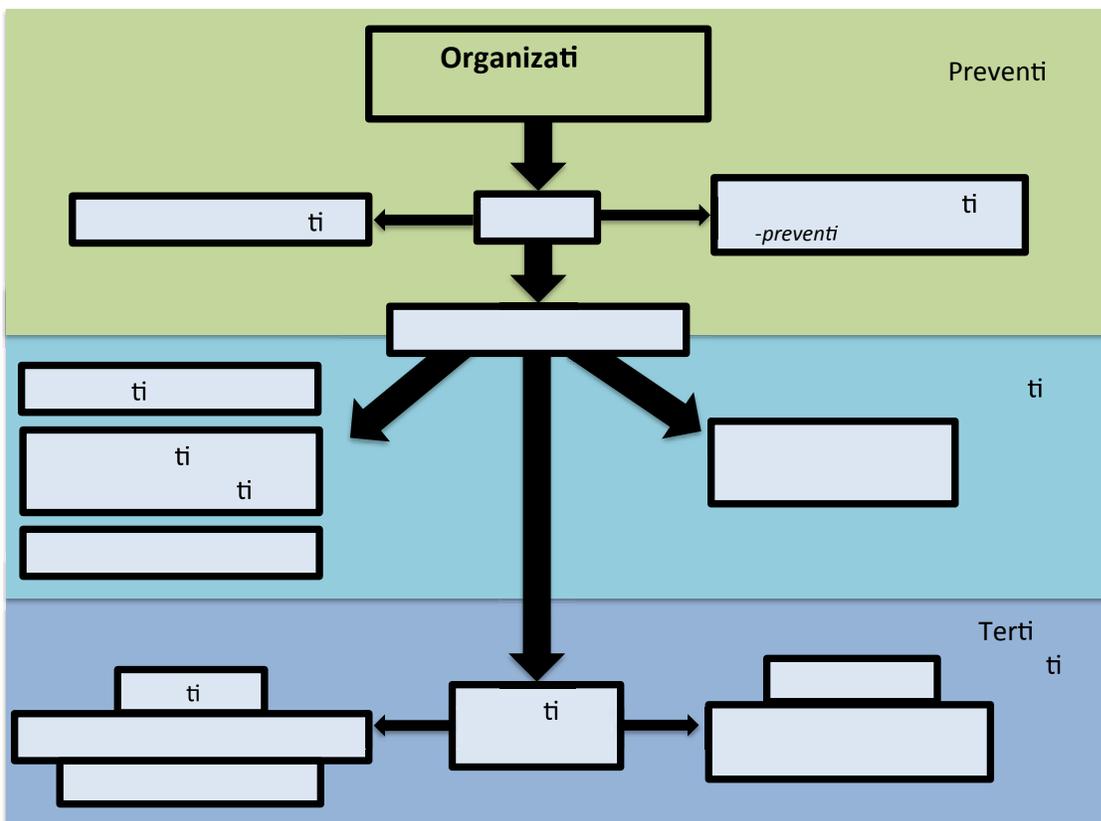
harassment and sexual misconduct through analysis of the relational experiences and behaviours among CAF leaders, perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. In their study of bullying in the Austrian military, Koeszegi, Zedlacher and Hudribusch found that about 50 percent of soldiers have observed, and 10 percent admit to have conducted, aggressive acts toward women.¹⁷ Clearly, the impact of one incident of harassment or assault is not limited to one individual, and importantly, can have far reaching implications for the cohesion and effectiveness of a military unit. In fact, the research conducted by Koeszegi, Zedlacher and Hudribusch was generated by an officer who had taken part in such behaviours during his early years of training, remained confused and bothered by his own participation, and wanted to better understand how he came to be involved in a process that he did not fully understand or support.¹⁸

Research has also been commissioned to capture the nature of organizational responses to harassment. In their recent review and analysis of harassment prevention and resolution policies and practices in organizations, Day, MacLellan and Penney identify three levels of activity and interventions that characterize efforts across organizations in general. Primary prevention includes organizational policies. Secondary interventions include formal procedures such as reporting systems, conflict resolution processes, discipline procedures, and performance management. Finally, tertiary interventions encompass a range of activities that develop in response to policy and doctrine, including training and education to prevent mistreatment behaviours and interventions and responses to victims and perpetrators.¹⁹ The summary of their findings is presented as the *Model of Organizational Mistreatment: Intervention Stages for Addressing Mistreatment* in Figure 1.

In terms of direct leadership, Day, MacLellan and Penney emphasize the role of leadership in mitigating misconduct/mistreatment of personnel, including the negative impact of authoritarian and laissez-faire direct leadership styles on prevalence of inappropriate behaviours in workplaces.²⁰ Similarly, the review recently conducted by Brown et al. considers the impacts of culture and leadership on gender integration and operational effectiveness in male-dominated environments.²¹ While this research identifies a number of progressive leadership strategies and best practices to change culture to better support gender diversity and mitigate harassment, extensive review of the scientific, academic and military literature reveals scant research-based

evidence and analysis to contribute to better understanding of the influences of leadership and culture on such outcomes, including substantive cultural change to support formally espoused values and policies. Notwithstanding, these analyses do provide preliminary insights into the critical role of direct leadership and cultural impacts on experiences of harassment, including higher likelihood that women working in male-dominated workplaces will experience harassment than those working in gender inclusive workplaces.²² Koeszegi, Zedlacher and Hudribusch further confirm that with the exception of the sexual harassment of women, very few studies exist which have investigated the relationship between cultural norms and misconduct in subunits of national armies,²³ thus underscoring the knowledge gap regarding such practices, processes and relationships within sub-unit cultures of military organizations, including the CAF.

Figure 1: Model of Organizational Mistreatment: Intervention Stages for Addressing Mistreatment (Day, MacLellan and Penney, 2015).



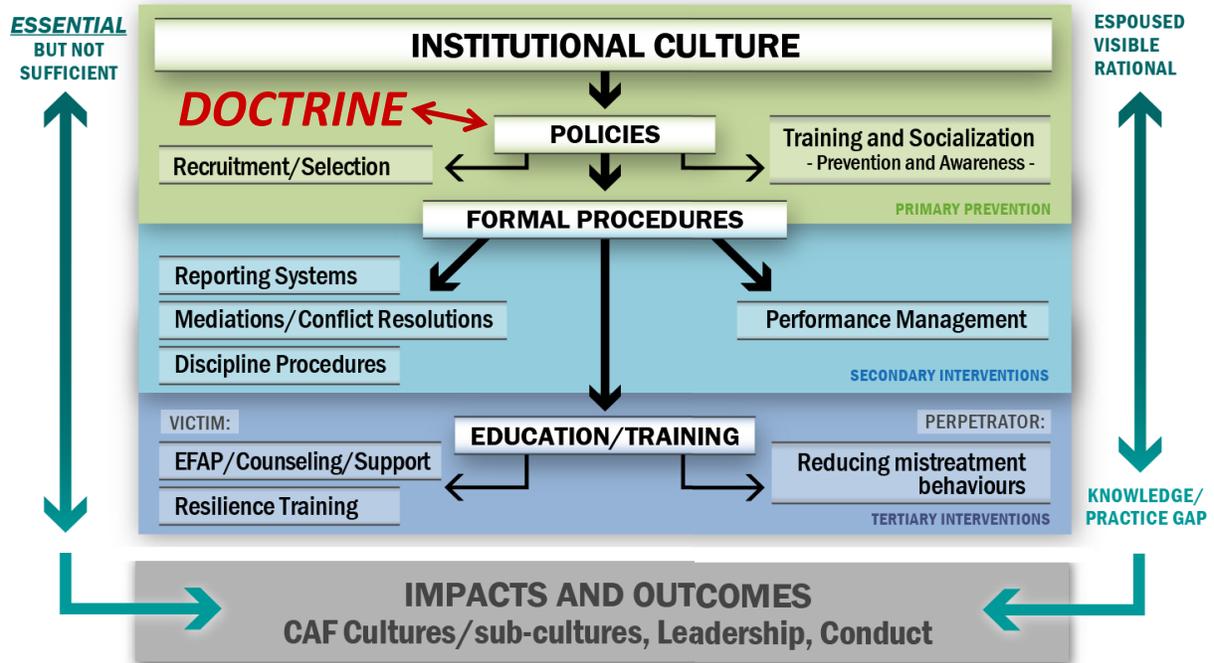
While successful social transformation within organizations relies on the skills of leaders at all levels to implement change strategies and prepare members for social change, leaders cannot

effectively facilitate change if they do not understand those characteristics and practices within culture which are sustained, with and without leadership intent. In their analysis of the relationship between military culture, masculine norms, attitudes toward women, and workplace aggression in the Austrian Armed Forces, for example, Koeszegi, Zedlacher, and Hudribusch suggest a relationship between socialization in training units, systematic workplace aggression (often sexually aggressive acts toward women), and traditional military norms.²⁴ While military harassment policy and formally endorsed procedures to address harassment place emphasis on individual behaviours and responses, military sociologists Soeters, Winslow and Weibull also note that subcultural patterns related to a range of behaviours including sexual violence can develop with rules and codes that are not considered acceptable within the larger organization or society.²⁵ By way of example, Winslow's ethnographic study of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, following the torture and death of a Somali teenager at the hands of Canadian soldiers in Somalia in 1993, concluded that in-group identity and socialization had a significant influence on the soldier sub-culture and informal authority structure that contributed to serious violence and misconduct within the regiment.²⁶

As illustrated in Figure 2, the institutional policy, procedures, and interventions that are put in place by those practicing institutional leadership make essential contributions to mitigating inappropriate conduct and social behaviours, including inappropriate sexual behaviours. In the case of the military, those documents and mechanisms which represent military ethos and doctrine are also critical as they convey the values and principles that guide military membership, what Dandeker and Gow have referred to as formal military culture.²⁷ Formal military culture, including those institutional mechanisms identified by Day, MacLellan and Penney, are often visible to most members of the organization; the CAF harassment survey administered in 2012 confirms this indicating, for example, that more than 98 percent of CAF members are aware that there is a CAF harassment policy.²⁸ Furthermore, the values associated with the policies and processes that are put in place to prevent misconduct toward others in the organization, including respect for the dignity of all persons (as formally endorsed within the *Statement of Defence Ethics*),²⁹ are publicly espoused by the most senior leaders of the organization. Finally, from the perspective of institutional leaders, these activities are rational and sufficient to drive appropriate behaviours, through top down direction and leadership. Yet,

incidents and behaviours such as sexual harassment and misconduct are frequently not visible to the most senior leadership of the organization. The reasons for this are not entirely clear; however, several organizational analysts suggest that embedded assumptions that organizations are gender neutral can mask practices that have negative impacts on those who represent gender difference in that organization. For example, Fletcher and Ely posit that organizations that recognize the historically embedded masculine interests, attributes and life situations and their associated influence on leadership/management assumptions, organizational design and processes is an important key to understanding gender differences in experience.³⁰ The challenge, then, is to first identify and understand cultural assumptions, relationships and processes and how they develop and influence behaviors within the CAF, and then identify strategies to mitigate inappropriate behaviours and negative impacts that persist in spite of institutional effort and direction. That is, although formal CAF culture driven by institutional leadership is an essential contributor to positive military workplace culture, it is not sufficient insurance against inappropriate sexual behaviours, and response to those behaviours when they do occur in the military. As suggested by Dandeker and Gow, it is the informal culture that is the most enduring and revealing,³¹ in terms of understanding the hearts and minds of military members and extent to which they have embraced social change.³²

Figure 2: The Institutional / Culture Gap
 (adapted from Day, MacLellan and Penney, 2015)



ADAPTED FROM DAY, MACLELLAN AND PENNEY, 2015

Culture

The report of the ERA describes a cultural environment that reflects “a significant disjunction between the aspiration of the CAF to embody a professional military ethos which embraces the principle of respect for the dignity of all persons, and the reality experienced by many CAF members day-to-day”.³³ With the exception of abstract recognition of the importance of diversity, CAF professional and leadership doctrine assumes a gender neutral culture. It does not articulate the potential for gender-based interpretations, applications, and implications of a professional ethos that draws from traditional notions of vocations and singular commitments to one organization and its identity, which in turn draw from traditional masculine frameworks and assumptions. For example, in articulating the ethos, values, and guiding principles for the CAF, *Duty with Honour* recognizes that, “The legitimacy of the profession of arms requires that it embodies the same values and beliefs as the society it defends, limited only by the functional requirements of the military”.³⁴ However, CAF culture, according to the ERA, is experienced

differently by women and men, different rank groups, and the various sub-cultural environments and operational units. In a recent review and analysis of research on professional, organizational and military identity, Butler, Eren, and Budgell also conclude that while it is clear that military ethos plays an important role in the professionalism of the military, there is little evidence that concepts and theories of professionalism have adapted to facilitate the social change that has taken place in the military in recent decades, and in particular the inclusion of women and various other representations of diversity.³⁵

The theoretical frameworks that address military culture often rely upon traditional interpretations of the “total institution”; that is, “a world with its own unique set of norms of behavior and dress, its own judicial system, and its own rights and responsibilities”,³⁶ and in which the military regulates almost every aspect of a member’s life.³⁷ From this perspective, military culture is dominated by military masculinity that draws heavily on traditional conceptions of male warriors, and is reinforced through enduring cultural processes. In her gender analysis of UN peacekeepers, for example, Sandra Whitworth highlights the role of military myths in defining what is natural, normal, and legitimate within a framework of military masculinity – courage and endurance; physical and psychological strength; rationality; toughness; obedience; discipline; and patriotism.³⁸ In what has been described as a post-modern approach, Canadian military ethos, presented in *Duty With Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, also articulates such beliefs, expectations and values: collective identity, fighting spirit, discipline, teamwork, physical fitness, duty, loyalty, integrity, courage, and warrior honour.³⁹

In contrast to theories which claim enduring impacts of masculine values on military experience, defence analysts emphasize the significant change that military institutions have realized in recent decades, including the inclusion of women in greater proportions and expanding roles. Concurrently, military sociologist Charles Moskos claimed a shift from institutional culture with a primary focus on individual commitment to the military and its objectives, to an occupational culture within which members considered military service simply a job rather than a commitment that transcended personal interests.⁴⁰ Since the end of the Cold War, military scholars have also assumed a shift from masculine military culture and ethos to military cultures that reflect androgynous/gender neutral ethos and structure with greater permeability with

civilian society. For example, in his analysis of the characteristics of a post-modern military post-1990, Moskos includes full gender integration.⁴¹ From a Canadian perspective, military sociologist Franklin Pinch claims that the CAF has become “more democratized, liberalized, civilianized, and individualized”.⁴² Furthermore, according to Pinch, “the presence of women is affecting, and will continue to affect, the units’ masculine cultural norms”.⁴³ However, in spite of the removal of restrictions in 1992, on the military service of homosexuals, in 2000 Pinch noted that “culture-based homophobia persists below the surface, especially among males within some segments of the combat arms”.⁴⁴ This observation mirrors those of the ERA in 2015 as she points to a military culture that degrades women and LGTBQ members through highly sexualized language and practices such as sexual discrimination and sexual misconduct.

Culture and Language

Clearly, the impact of language cannot be isolated from the overall cultural environment. As such, it is important to consider the role of language within military culture. This includes analysis of its impact on creating and sustaining a sexualized environment, including the use of gender-based labeling and language, on the acceptance and treatment of those who represent gender difference such as women and Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, and Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ) members of the CAF. In her study of language and inclusion in the Australian Defence Force, Thomson claims that understanding how language works in organizations as a form of social behavior to support competing power relations between groups and individuals, is essential to positive culture change.⁴⁵ That is, it is important to understand how language works as a barrier to inclusion, as a first step in identifying how to use language to contribute to inclusive culture. According to Thomson, “Language use perpetuates the current Anglo-Australian male military culture, but can equally underpin a new, more inclusive future culture”.⁴⁶ According to Schein’s model of organizational culture, which has a significant influence on CAF leadership doctrine, language is one of the most highly visible and accessible features of culture;⁴⁷ consequently it is important to further consider the extent to which it represents cultural values and beliefs that are more difficult to identify, and how related assumptions might influence gender-based misconduct. Importantly, it is a tangible cultural behavior that can be influenced through culture change strategy if its impacts are fully understood.

Achieving a comprehensive understanding of culture, and in particular as it impacts inappropriate sexual behavior, is a formidable challenge. According to military analyst Don Snider, military culture is comprised of four essential elements: ceremonial displays and etiquette; discipline; professional ethos; and cohesion and *esprit de corps*.⁴⁸ As noted earlier, the espoused values and ethos of the military is not always reflected in practice. Although not defined by formal military structures, military culture is not consistent across the organization, for example, across tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Furthermore, culture can manifest in different ways depending on circumstance and situations that actors face. Regardless, militaries place considerable focus and resource to develop their members with a strong sense of cohesion and *esprit de corps*, which is considered by many to be essential to operational success, and in particular on the battlefield. The process of developing this collective identity, to replace sense of self, begins as soon a new recruit begins training.⁴⁹

Culture, Socialization, and Military Identity

In her study of gender, folklore and military culture, Carol Burke observes that to understand how military culture is transmitted from one generation of recruits to the next, we need only look at boot camp.⁵⁰ She further notes that above all, “basic training demands a suppression of individual difference and exacts conformity in all outward actions and dress,”⁵¹ and that recruits undergo a process of “deindividuation”, suspension of the self, and an uncritical investment in group identity.⁵² Such group identity, according to Burke, comes with a sense of anonymity and loss of self that allows a person to behave in ways that a self-conscious individual normally would not.⁵³ Along with other post-Cold War changes, Snider observes that while orderly conduct remains an important aspect of military socialization, militaries no longer apply authoritarian domination as they did in the past; instead, manipulation, persuasion and group consensus are exercised in the process of developing professional ethos.⁵⁴ Reflecting the latter approach, CAF leadership doctrine defines socialization as “the formal and informal processes of teaching and persuading others to accept the core beliefs, values, behavioural norms, and roles of a particular culture”.⁵⁵ Similar to other military and para-military organizations, new recruits to the CAF undergo a process of organizational socialization to institutional values and norms as

reflected in the doctrinal conception of professional identity in the CAF, including those values and principles which are espoused to characterize the profession of arms. However, even as recruits are undergoing formal training on Canadian and espoused ethos and military values, and organizational rules, they are also exposed to less visible cultural practices. The ERA notes, for example, that, “Experiences with sexual harassment and sexual assault begin as early as basic training, where inappropriate language used by trainers appears to go unpunished”.⁵⁶ Insofar as most new recruits to the military are young women and men undergoing a new and challenging experience, often riddled with the use of alcohol, the CAF shares a challenge similar to those who manage university campuses and programs. The CAF, however, has much more control and influence over its new recruits as it claims an essential framework of values and principles related to the unique responsibilities of military service; that is, as discussed thus far, the profession of arms in Canada represents a collective responsibility and identity “distinguished by the concept of service before self, the lawful, ordered application of military force and the acceptance of the concept of unlimited liability”.⁵⁷ Clearly, military socialization has a powerful impact on its members, beginning with new recruits, as it seeks to create and sustain military identity; however, the extent to which the socialization of this identity impacts misconduct or alternatively influences positive conduct in the CAF is not clear.

In developing strategies to create a gender inclusive culture and mitigate those cultural practices which undermine the value and dignity of those who represent gender difference, it is important to understand the role of socialization processes in reinforcing formally espoused values and informal cultural values and practices related to misconduct. Also, as noted earlier in the discussion, incidents of sexual harassment and misconduct impact beyond the individuals directly involved. CAF policy provides for third-party reporting of an incident that an individual has witnessed, and in fact imposes an obligation to report sexual misconduct. However, the ERA noted that third party reporting is very rare and suggested that reluctance to report is linked to cultural practices and assumptions that discourage such telling in spite of formally stated organizational obligations. Similar observations have been made in relationship to ethical behaviours in the CAF, including analysis conducted by Messervey and Davis which suggests that ethical decision-making strategies can be linked to the cultural conditions within which inappropriate sexual behaviours take place;⁵⁸ that is, it is important to consider cultural impacts

on ethical decision-making that result in misconduct, including sex and gender-based misconduct.

Culture and Gender

As noted, to a large extent, military ethos and doctrine is gender neutral in its bid to reflect the values of Canada and the principles of military service. When military leaders claim that the CAF is gender neutral they are emphasizing that the standards, expectations, and opportunities are the same for women and men and men in the organization. In this sense, it is essential that all women and men are treated fairly and equitably. Yet, it is also true that different individuals and groups will be impacted differently by what may appear to be a gender neutral policy, strategy or practice. One of the key recommendations of the ERA is that the CAF “Establish a strategy to effect cultural change to eliminate the sexualized environment and to better integrate women, including by conducting a gender-based analysis (GBA) of CAF policies”.⁵⁹ To do so, demands understanding of the meanings and impacts of gender, and of organizational experiences on different groups of women and men, as well as full recognition that the roll out of processes identified within formal institutional policy which are intended to be gender neutral in their impacts, can be interrupted in various ways by informal cultural practices and assumptions.

GBA reflects the academic literature, in which gender has been understood for well over 30 years to refer to the socially constructed roles of women and men and relationships between them in a given society. Gender is not limited to dichotomous sex-based understandings of differences between women and men based on biological sex, even though strictly biological sex-based differences can contribute to gender. That is, it is essential to understand differences informed by gender roles, assumptions and values in a given society, and how such values and beliefs can be applied to interpretations that are strictly attributed to biological sex-based differences. Historian Joan Scott traces the use of the term gender to the feminist movement and its rejection of biological determinism which is implicit in the use of terms such as sex or sexual difference.⁶⁰ As noted by Scott, gender refers not only to women and men, but also to the relationships between them; that is, “a relational notion that women and men [are] defined and understood in terms of one another, and no understanding of either [can] be achieved in an entirely separate

manner”.⁶¹ In its simplest recent usage, however, it has become a synonym for women. This has particular implications for the impact of GBA in a military context, including experience, interpretation, and response to sexual harassment and sexual misconduct.

Given the gender neutral assumptions that inform military culture today, initiatives related to gender are often resisted, as are suggestions that cultural practices reflect gender-based dynamics. While the roots of social resistance can vary, in their analysis of resistance to gender mainstreaming and gender training, Lombardo and Mergaert suggest that learning about gender: can make individuals feel exposed to criticism and suggestions that there is a need to change their own personal identity; can evoke beliefs that an agenda of gender transformation is a feminist agenda based on ideological and emotional arguments, rather than those that are rational, scientific, or legal; or generate negative reactions based on learner belief that the teacher/gender instructor is trying to manipulate them in some way.⁶² This underscores the need to better understand both resistance and inclusion of gender-based diversity to achieve understanding of cultural processes which can be emphasized to mitigate sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the military, and those negative practices which need to become more visible to leaders to facilitate intervention strategy and practice.

Adopted by the Canadian government in 1995, GBA is an analytical approach that supports gender mainstreaming in seeking to integrate consideration of differential impacts of policies, programs, and legislation on diverse groups of women and men (Status of Women Canada, 2001).⁶³ Most recently, GBA has been promoted by Status of Women Canada as GBA+, with “+” added to emphasize the inclusion of the intersection of relevant identity factors in a given context, including, for example, as age, education, language, geography, culture and income with considerations of gender.⁶⁴ In the context of military structure and culture, it is also important to ensure that analytical approaches are inclusive of those intersecting factors that are unique to military service, including the intersections of gender with rank, environment, occupation, operational status, etc.

Clearly, GBA is relevant to the analysis of those dynamics which influence experiences of harassment and misconduct within the military, including historical foundations of disadvantage

and exclusion. Regardless of the current claims of gender neutral ethos and doctrine, the foundations of military culture reflect strongly held historical assumptions regarding the unequivocal relationship between masculinity and military effectiveness. Military culture reflects both historical roots and social change in its assumptions, practices, and membership. Consequently, in spite of what appears to be similar experiences within similar contexts, the impacts and implications can vary for different men women who experience harassment and assault. For example, research suggests that incidents of a sexual nature may be a stronger predictor of mental stress among men than women.⁶⁵

Many organizational analysts have recognized that understanding gendered processes is a critical element of understanding behaviour. According to Lorber, for example, institutions, not individuals create gendered processes and gender is manifest in personal identities and social interactions among women and men.⁶⁶ Because gender and organizational culture are inextricably linked,⁶⁷ it is important to integrate considerations of gender into this research. Importantly, GBA adopts a relational approach that recognizes that women and men are understood and defined in terms of one another; that is, women and men cannot be understood without considering the relationships among them.⁶⁸ Sexual assault does not take place in a vacuum; that is, one incident of sexual assault, for example, is one outcome of a myriad of relationships and processes. Given the emphasis on collective identities and team cohesion as essential contributors to military effectiveness along with historical emphasis on masculinity and operational effectiveness, the integration of gender-based considerations into the analysis of the dynamics and relationships among women and men is particularly salient within the military context.

The Research Proposal

As noted throughout, the predominant focus of the research is the influence of leadership and culture on both mitigating and exacerbating sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, including responses among leaders and others who witness or become aware of the misconduct. A multi-year project, the first year of research is well underway with a focus on the conduct of comprehensive literature reviews and analyses to provide the foundation for the development of

the qualitative research. These reviews, although focused on several unique concepts and themes, are designed to provide an integrated body of knowledge of culture as it influences misconduct, and in particular sex and gender-based misconduct in military, para-military and other organizations. This includes review and analysis of the theories, concepts and research approaches that have been applied to the study of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in organizations. Related concepts and themes currently under investigation include: GBA and professionalism; culture and socialization; culture and social media; culture and language; cultural risk factors; culture and bystander effect; implicit gender-based assumptions among leaders; and organizational responses to perpetrators.

Two streams of qualitative research are also in the development stage – one focused on culture and socialization, beginning with exploration and analysis of early entry training in the CAF. Subsequent sequential phases will examine the cultural influences within environmental and occupational training, employment within a unit, and finally, operational deployment socialization and culture. The second stream of qualitative research focuses on developing a comprehensive understanding of leadership processes in the CAF, from the perspective of leaders at different levels, and of the dynamics among levels of leadership, including leaders and subordinate leaders. This research begins with senior non-commissioned members. This group of leaders has significant responsibility for the direct leadership, discipline, cohesion, and well-being of junior personnel, and they are more likely than any other group of leaders to be directly challenged to make appropriate decisions and take effective action to address incidents of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. Subsequent phases of this research stream will include leaders at the junior non-commissioned, junior officer, and senior officer levels.

Conclusion

Importantly, the proposed research does not seek to challenge or reinforce the findings of the ERA but to provide analysis of available scientific evidence, identify the gaps in evidence-based research related to the ERA observations, and finally to implement defence social science research to address the gaps. This discussion places particular emphasis on leadership and culture processes in the CAF in seeking to understand what we cannot explain and what we assume to be

true in the absence of scientific evidence. In addition, this research inquiry is shaped by theoretical frameworks regarding culture and experiences in organizations, and in particular organizations such as the military that are male-dominated and place particular priority on gender-based roles historically ascribed to men. The research recognizes that numerous themes highlighted in the report of the ERA are integral to processes related to culture and leadership and thus are both integrated into the leadership and culture themes which dominate the proposal. Finally, the integration of gender-based analysis is critical in understanding the dynamics of gender and organization, including the masculinities, which shape and influence sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the CAF.

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In response to the themes identified in the 2015 report of the “External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces [CAF],” the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA) developed a comprehensive, multi-year research plan. Importantly, the proposed research does not seek to challenge or accept the findings of the external review but to provide analysis of available scientific evidence to respond to concerns and questions raised in the report and to conduct further research in areas that have not been sufficiently explored by defence social science research to respond to the concerns of the review. The proposal places particular emphasis on leadership and culture processes in the CAF as it seeks to understand what we cannot explain and what we assume to be true in the absence of scientific evidence. Given the developing priority of gender mainstreaming within both domestic and international military contexts, and the emphasis placed on gender-based analysis (GBA) in the external review, the research further seeks to integrate GBA across themes and research domains. Related domains such as victim support; socialization; culture and language; culture and social media; training culture; third party reporting and bystander intervention; and response to perpetrators are all important unique and related themes identified in the DGMPRA proposal; however, this paper places particular focus on the analysis of available research that will inform qualitative study of the culture and leadership dynamics of the CAF, as they influence conduct and response to sexual harassment and sexual misconduct in the CAF.